



Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

# School Health News

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## **'Light' Cigarettes are not safer!**

Light cigarettes have been marketed by the tobacco industry as being a healthier smoking choice, a safe alternative to cessation, and a first step toward quitting smoking. Research, however, has failed to show a reduction in smoking-related health risks with light cigarette use. Nor is there a documented increase in smoking cessation, a decrease in carbon monoxide or tar inhalation, or a reduction in the rates of cardiovascular disease and lung cancer. This study investigates adolescents' attitudes and knowledge of the effects of light cigarettes versus regular cigarettes.

Participants were 267 adolescents (mean age of 14) who completed a self-administered questionnaire during class time. The results demonstrated that adolescents thought they would be significantly less likely to develop lung cancer, have a heart attack, die from a smoking-related disease, get a bad cough, have trouble breathing, or get wrinkles when smoking light cigarettes, versus regular ones. They thought it would take significantly longer to become addicted to light versus regular cigarettes and that it would be significantly easier to quit smoking light cigarettes. The authors are impressed with common misperceptions of adolescents. They recommend that when teachers and health care professionals discourage adolescents from smoking, they specify the risks of light cigarettes for addiction and other health problems.

*(Information taken from School Health Alert, April 2005)*

If you would like someone to come talk with students at your school please contact the Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department at 441-6225 or Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs at 475-2694.

